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Men's Basketball Preview: GS Opens Road Swing at South Alabama

GS has won 10 of its last 11 games.

Marc Gignac



Dan Groover

Coye Simmons and the Eagles play at South Alabama Saturday.

Men's Basketball | 1/27/2017 11:34:00 AM

Story Links

Georgia Southern (14-6, 7-0) at South Alabama (9-11, 2-5)

Saturday, Jan. 28 - Mitchell Center (10,000) – Mobile, Ala. - 8:05 p.m. ET

Television: ESPN3

[Live Video](#) | [Live Audio](#) | [Live Stats](#)

Radio: 105.5 FM WIFO (Jesup), 100.9 FM WLYU (Lyons), 103.7 FM WBMZ

(Metter), 900 AM WJLG (Savannah)

Series Record: GS trails 9-4, W1

Last meeting: W, 84-79 OT, 1/9/17 (Hanner)

Probable Starters:

#0 [Montae Glenn](#)

#2 [Mike Hughes](#)

#3 [Ike Smith](#)

#4 [Tookie Brown](#)

#10 [Jake Allsmiller](#)

Georgia Southern Information:

[\[Stats \(PDF\)\]](#) [\[Roster\]](#) [\[Schedule\]](#) [\[Game Notes \(PDF\)\]](#)

South Alabama Information:

[\[Stats \(PDF\)\]](#) [\[Roster\]](#) [\[Schedule\]](#)

Setting the Scene

- Georgia Southern opens a two-game road trip at South Alabama Saturday.
- It's the second meeting between the teams this season. Georgia Southern survived the Jags for an 84-79 overtime win Jan. 9 in Hanner Fieldhouse.
- Winners of their last eight, the Eagles are coming off a 91-80 home victory over Coastal Carolina Monday. Five of the last six wins in the streak have been decided by five points or less, and the game against South Alabama was decided in overtime.
- It's the Eagles' longest win streak since the 2005-06 campaign when GS won eight in a row. Georgia Southern won 13 straight in the 2003-04 season.
- Georgia Southern is 5-5 on the road this season, and the Eagles have won their first two conference road games for the first time since the 2002-03 season. GS won three straight on the road to open the conference slate that campaign.
- The Eagles are 7-0 in league play for the first time since the 1991-92 season and sit atop the Sun Belt standings. GS won its first nine games in the Trans America Athletic Conference that year.
- Georgia Southern features the Sun Belt's top two scorers in sophomores [Ike Smith](#) (19.9 ppg) and [Tookie Brown](#) (18.5 ppg). They were the third-highest freshman scoring duo in the country last year (1-Rice's Marcus Evans and Marquez Letcher-Ellis, 2- FSU's Dwayne Bacon and Malik Beasley).
- South Alabama is 1-4 in its last five and coming off a 74-62 road loss at Arkansas State Monday.
- The Jaguars are 7-4 at home and 2-1 in home league play. Four of their league losses have been on the road.
- Four Jags are averaging double figures in the scoring column, led by Ken Williams at 12.3 points per game.

The Series

- South Alabama leads the all-time series, which began in 1978, 9-4, and swept all three meetings with the Eagles last season, including a first round game in the Sun Belt Tournament.

- GS won the first meeting this season, 84-79, in overtime back on Jan. 9 in Hanner Fieldhouse.
- Prior to the 2014-15 season, the teams had not met since 2010 and 2011, both South Alabama victories.
- The Jaguars won four of the first five meetings from 1978-80.
- Georgia Southern swept the season series in 2014-15.

More Team Storylines

- Georgia Southern has no seniors in its rotation and starts three sophomores and two juniors. Walk-ons [James Holder](#) and [Dominique Bullock](#) are the team's lone seniors.
- GS is averaging 79.9 points a game this season, the most since the 2004-05 campaign, when the Eagles scored at an 80.8 clip. The Eagles have scored over 80 12 times, including six straight games from 12/20-1/14, and have scored over 90 five times, including the last two. It's the first time the Eagles scored 90-plus points in back-to-back Division I games since Feb. 11 and Feb. 13, 2006.
- Georgia Southern ranks 46th nationally and second in the Sun Belt in fewest turnovers and ranks 43rd nationally and second in the SBC in turnovers per game. The Eagles have logged single-digit turnovers in five games and posted a season-low six vs. Troy (1/7).
- The Eagles are off to their best start in league play since the 1991-92 season.
- GS is ranked 13th in this week's CollegeInsider.com Mid-Major Top-25.
- Last year, Georgia Southern set new school records with 3-pointers made (282) and attempted (834) in a season. GS ranks second in the SBC in threes per game (8.9) this season, and the Eagles have made 10 or more threes eight times.
- GS is 10-1 since changing its starting lineup following an 86-49 loss at Minnesota Dec. 9.
- The Eagles have shot 50 percent or better in a half in 16 games this season, including 60 percent or better twice. The Eagles have shot 50 percent or better in both halves of a game twice (GSU, 12/31 and CCU, 1/23). The Eagles have shot 50 percent or better in five games.
- GS ranks second in the Sun Belt in free throws. The Eagles have attempted 30-plus free throws in five games and made 20-plus free throws in six contests.
- GS has a combined record of 29-11 in Sun Belt games played in January and February since joining the league in 2014-15.
- Georgia Southern plays conference games the rest of the way on Saturdays and Mondays.
- Georgia Southern returned all five starters and 11 lettermen from last season's squad. Ninety-four percent of the Eagles' scoring and rebounding is back in uniform. and Georgia Southern is still young.
- Georgia Southern was picked fourth in the Sun Belt Preseason Coaches Poll, [Tookie Brown](#) was named preseason first-team all-league and [Mike Hughes](#) earned second-team honors.
- [Mark Byington](#) is coaching in his 128th career game today and his 117th at Georgia Southern. His 51 wins in his first three seasons at Georgia Southern are the best of any coach in the modern era.
- Under [Mark Byington](#), Georgia Southern is 43-7 in games when leading at half and 54-

4 when leading with five minutes to go, but three of those losses in each category have some this season.

- Georgia Southern is 30-7 in Hanner Fieldhouse in its last 37 contests there and 37-13 under [Mark Byington](#).
- Since joining the Sun Belt in 2014, 24 Georgia Southern games against Sun Belt schools have been decided by five points or less, and the Eagles are 17-7.
- The Eagles are 22-1 in Sun Belt games when leading at halftime. GS is 24-0 when leading with five minutes to go.
- Georgia Southern's come back from 16 points down at ULM (1/16) is the Eagles' largest since a 17-point rally vs. UTA March 5, 2015.
- GS finished the non-conference portion of its schedule with a 7-6 record, its first winning record in non-conference play since 2014-15 when the Eagles went 8-3. It's just the second time in the last eight seasons that the Eagles were above .500 in non-conference games.
- Georgia Southern played six non-conference games against five teams that are currently in the top-100 in the NCAA RPI (Akron - 41, FGCU - 89, Minn - 21, NC State - 59, Winthrop - 85).
- The Eagles played 10 of their first 12 games away from home. The stretch ended Dec. 20 at Winthrop, which also capped a four-game road trip that covered 4,120 miles of travel as the Eagles went from Minnesota to Ft. Myers to Miami to South Carolina and back home.
- GS played three contests in Savannah this season and won all three. The Eagles defeated Florida A&M (83-72) and Radford (65-64) in the Savannah Invitational and won 94-75 at Savannah State.
- The Eagles picked up the 1,200th win in the history of the program, which began play in 1926-27, when they topped Coastal Georgia 92-43 Nov. 14.
- GS held Coastal Georgia to 23.1 percent shooting from the field, the lowest for an opponent since holding North Georgia to 22.7 percent in 2003.
- Georgia Southern used 11 different combinations of starting lineups last year. GS has used six this season.

Next Up

- Georgia Southern wraps up its two-game road trip at Troy Monday. Tipoff is set for 8 p.m. ET.

Georgia Southern Athletics provides up-to-date information on all its sports through its official website, GSEagles.com, through social media channels facebook.com/GSAthletics, twitter.com/GSAthletics, iOS app Georgia Southern Eagles and Android app Eagles GATA. For tickets to Georgia Southern athletics events, visit GSEagles.com/tickets.

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visit GSEagles.com/tickets.

In order to expedite entry and provide a safe environment for all patrons and participants, Georgia Southern Athletics has implemented a Clear Bag Policy for all ticketed sporting events, effective Aug. 1, 2017. Fans can find the complete policy as well as an FAQ section at GSEagles.com/ClearBag.